

bloody, pulpy, mess

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by [trans_ylvania](#)

Summary

connor murphy's obituary, as written by zoe murphy

loosely based off an excerpt from 'the world is a sphere of ice and our hands are made of fire'

by ritika jyala

My brother shattered my rib one morning and gave me half of his orange in the evening. And I was grateful, a kind of gratefulness that rots you inside out and curdles your blood. *He* should have been on his knees, roaring for mercy. It should have been *his* burden, knobby victims of rug burn.

The citrus stung my bloody wounds, made my wheezing breaths worse. I thanked him anyway.

I remember being a little girl and begging to be loved. Love, to me, was synonymous with being an only child, to have as much care, goods, and as much power over doting parents as I wished, a big grin always upon my lips.

So when he ran away from home for the first time, I remember shaking with fear and hurt and running to his bedroom, crawling into the half he tossed and turned with upset onto, still indented, begging and pleading with all my might as if blowing out the candles on the first wish that ever meant anything, wishing with more longing than I ever did for the greedy, greedy, desire of parental love, for him to be alive, safe, *happy*, home. I was right to do this, and I knew it. Everything about it felt like the right thing to do. My flashlight as I pelted through the forest, sobbing his name, killed every shadow of doubt on impact. Even my fairy godmother wept.

Siblinghood is being the only two on a helpless and capsizing boat, forever stuck between throwing them off the boat to save yourself and adoration keeping you from doing anything but.

~~*How can I live with you, Connor? How can I ever live without you?*~~

~~*Citrus rinds upon this floor, and half-filled, fragile glasses in your enormous yellow-fingernailed grip?*~~

I can't be the only one out of the two of us who remembers the night after you came back home for the first time. We let ourselves be awful in the morning, let our eyes sag and shadow, our hands shake, depending on each other's shoulders, feeling too much to stay upright any more; sitting cross legged on the floor like kindergarteners, like we were learning the alphabet on each other in the ungodly hours of the living room. You peeled two oranges with precision. In your hands, the parts separate smoothly and flawlessly. It's wonderful to watch. I rip holes in an orange as I peel it. The juice squirts everywhere. I hope I never learn how to peel oranges. Speaking of night terrors and bad dreams of childhood made us real people. You were no longer the devil to me. I wonder what I was no longer to you, so much so that you surveyed me with eyes of such bruising ache and worried compassion, I about became my own runway. You understood my hand-me-down phobias of laughable things like mirrors and loved me, loved me as I always wished, as I was, siblinghood regardless. I am a citrus fruit. Grasp my skin and peel it off. Split me up and reveal the bloody, pulpy mess inside.

I hack and slash the letters of a boy no longer alive and kicking into the waxy, almost-orange instrument of my vessel so that I will not smolder lonely. I ate the orange. Shucked it of all

protection. A broken-glass domesticity upended all the more with permanence of The End. I overflowed with pulp.

One evening, in a fit of anger, I let him discover through great volumes how I wished to be an only child, that of all possible options, it was just my luck he was my brother, I never wanted him to be my brother and he roared back that he never asked to be one either, that I had never been the good news Cynthia had wished. I was sentient acetone and the shrinking room was the sickly sweet smell of gasoline. There is only one kind of fight you can have, could have had, with my brother. You say things that stab, you cause wounds you can't heal. You have to say these things, you see, you must. Your fury overtakes you and it is the only way he will listen, when you are convulsing with rage that rips out of all facial openings like venom. I was furious and mangled his favorite photograph seven times, seven layers of remorse and disgrace, showing himself and a boy he used to get stoned with, arms all over each other, presumably sober. I yearned to scrape away my dominant hand, one which had shot in the leg my darling older brother, even before he wailed all night. I was the devil, surely. He had previously thought of me as the devil, and he was right. We fail to realize our own potential for wickedness until the potentiality is no more.

Connor had never been one for forgiveness. The logic of being injured seems to go toward never forgetting either the harm or the one who caused it. When you forgive, a higher level of heavenly kindness emerges. You are free once you have learned to forgive. When you can't forgive, you become a captive of the pain you've suffered. Connor has only ever looked caged, always ready to grow unhappy, always fast to become imprisoned by that warmth. In an odd sense, it keeps the underlying battle human. His mercy was like a set of teeth. I'd be lucky if he ever spoke a word to me again. I thought that my stomach was going to explode, and shame adversely affected my perception the next morning, when he refused to glance at me or utter a word.

Eggshells break and fall to the ground. He was sadly preparing my breakfast. I can only picture him being sad. Locks in a knot, I miss his long hair. *"Last night, how did you sleep? I know you mentioned that your dreams were bugging you again."* No, he hadn't done so. But I knew: mortal eyes, so deep and poisonous, cemeteries of aspirations; the dwellings of the departed; and skylights of personality; and gorgeous, entire, full; so finely draped in the hollowed caramel lagoon which leak inner feelings he could never talk about. I had considered stealing them. Oh, and the dreams. They were much too realistic, much too painful. I was starting to lose him without even knowing who he was. He didn't hide, he told me things. We were both royally fucked, and we always knew it.

(Oh, God, if you only knew how horrible things were.) (You shook me to my core.) (I can't remember who you are anymore.) As I tried to get closer to you, you stepped away. (Gore and such. I was tempted...) (Maybe I shouldn't write that, not quite yet.) (Your last name, your blood, made me this way. It's not because of you.)

He is afraid of me, too, it was never one-sided. He's too scared. I'm sure of it. As he stirs the pan, he's frightened and his fingertips are trembling. I caused him too much pain to not be seen as a threat. I knew too late that the picture was important. He'd stop cooking, he was black coffee.

Please, he's silently, so silently, pleading for help. *Please please please*, flipping the toast with a sigh.

Is it possible to joke about what happened? Maybe someday? Maybe I had convinced both of us...yeah, yeah, yeah, he's said it before. He's such a *bitch* sometimes. *God*, shut the *fuck* up. He's spilling teary eyes into my tea.

All he did last night was not hurt me back. Why is he not angry? I'm angry at him for not being angry. Him being angry was my constant. Seeing him like this is new and scary and *wrong*. I feel so guilty, like my body might die. Then I would just be a brain with no mouth and I wouldn't be able to tell him anything to his back like I'm sorry, I love you. Of course I did, I do. He's worried. I hated it, it absolutely petrified me.

(He was so close yet so fucking far.) (Music and marijuana, it's possible that his beliefs were correct.) (Maybe he's the one who's realistic, close to the truth.) (Maybe he's the same, dreadful and torturous.) (Maybe it was me, who was both loud and secretive.) (Maybe it's for the best that I don't have him to look after, needy and childlike.) (Perhaps we'll be bestest friends for the rest of one's life, as fire and air.) (Maybe I was the crazy one.)

It wasn't the eggs, pulverized in a way that was supposed to be delicate because of the price tag that in all truth stunk up the house. Even though they were pre cut a few nights previously and put in the refrigerator until it became time to prepare an omelette, the scent reached neighbor's nostrils that same day and for several hours after, it was still the onions which helped make my older brother cry.

He made us a summer breakfast, table full of fake blooms. I want to *have*, without taking anything. I can't take anything else, not from him, not after what I did, so I'm, to a large degree, grateful for what he gives. And then a hand gently rubbing my own extended over to me, quietly offering half an orange.

Years later, I hope to be peeling oranges for people I might love.

Connor peels oranges with precision. In his hands, the parts separate smoothly and flawlessly. It's wonderful to watch. I rip holes in oranges as I peel them. The juice squirts everywhere. I hope I never learn how to peel oranges.

This is not a garden and nothing will bloom here. My brother is forever gone. He is dead and he will always be and will never not be. My brother is dead and I need dirt under my fingernails and a strong stomach to ever love him again.

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How can I live with you, Connor? How can I ever live without you?

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